Bureau of Land Management

EDUCATION, INTERPRETATION, and YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

2013

BLM

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers more than 245 million acres of public land in the United States, the most of any federal agency. As steward of the land, the BLM has relationships with millions of people and thousands of organizations, schools, and communities. This report offers a sampling of the BLM's efforts during fiscal year (FY) 2012 to educate, inform, and provide opportunities for people of all ages to connect with public lands and waters. It also summarizes the participation and reach of our programs.

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Hands on the Land (HOL) is a national interagency network of outdoor classrooms on public lands. HOL sites develop education programs in partnership with local schools and communities. In FY 2012, the BLM's 50 HOL sites hosted 1,131 days of outdoor classroom activities and engaged more than 50,000 students, teachers, and parents. Volunteer time associated with HOL sites exceeded 31,000 hours.

Many BLM field offices participate in a variety of **educational programs** in conjunction with local schools. In times of tight budgets, when schools cannot afford to send children on field trips to public lands for onsite learning, BLM's staff and volunteers enhance school curricula with classroom programs. Overall, educational programs reached more than 94,000 students in classrooms and on field trips in FY 2012.

VISITOR OUTREACH

The BLM **interpretation program** allows visitors to connect in a personal way to the public lands. Through formal interpretive programs and lectures, walking tours, historic demonstrations, wayside panels, visitor center exhibits, and other approaches, BLM interpreters and partners enable visitors to have a meaningful, safe, and enjoyable experience on the public lands. In FY 2012, more than 3 million people attended BLM interpretive programs.

FUN FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES

The **Take It Outside!** program helps ensure that children, older youth, and families have access to outdoor experiences on public lands. In 2012, the BLM achieved its Take It Outside! program goals by reaching nearly 75,000 participants in more than 250 different activities that involved getting outdoors and active on BLM lands. Outdoor activities included 41 overnight and day camps and 112 recreational outings. An additional 102 Take It Outside! activities included Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace outdoor ethics education sessions in which participants learned how to recreate responsibly. The BLM worked with 310 partners who invested more than 15,000 hours of staff time. Volunteers more than doubled that with 44,000 hours.

CAREER PATHWAYS

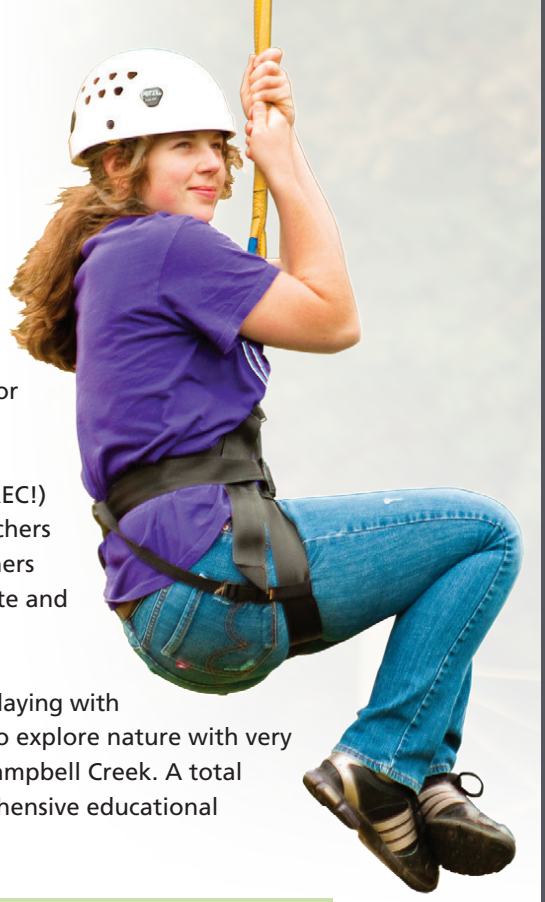
The BLM succeeded in meeting the Secretary of the Interior's **youth employment** goal for 2012 by hiring more than 4,200 youths through student employment programs and partnerships with youth-serving organizations, including youth corps, universities, and other nonprofit groups. In FY 2012, a new initiative, "America's Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists," was launched in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service. More than $1 million in federal funding was leveraged with more than $2 million in nonfederal funds to engage hundreds of young people in conservation projects, many of which focused on underserved and urban youth.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPREAD THE WORD

In FY 2012, the BLM developed innovative approaches to educating people about public lands, featuring stories on internal and external websites and expanding the use of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. "My Public Lands" (http://mypubliclands.tumblr.com/) emerged as a top Tumblr blog, attracting nearly 100,000 followers and national press coverage.

The BLM's "Excellence in Interpretation or Education" Awards were presented to Leisyka Parrott, Arcata Field Office, California; Terina Goicoechea, Western Montana District; and Peggy McGuckian, Winnemucca District Office, Nevada, shown below with Aris Evia of the BLM Director's Office, at the National Association for Interpretation's National Workshop in Hampton, Virginia, in November 2012.

STATE HIGHLIGHTS



ALASKA

Fairbanks: The BLM's Central Yukon Field Office partnered with the Student Conservation Association and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation to host its first group of high school volunteers from Anaktuvuk Pass for 2 weeks at the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center in Coldfoot.

Anchorage: The Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom (iTREC!) program provides yearlong training for Alaskan teachers from rural and urban schools along the historic trail. Teachers in the 2012 program attended a weeklong summer institute and two weekend workshops during the year.

Anchorage: Parents were offered the experience of playing with their children outside and encouraged to continue to explore nature with very young children at the Moms, Pops, and Tots program at Campbell Creek. A total of 309 people participated. Campbell Creek offers comprehensive educational programs for students in the Anchorage area.

ARIZONA

Yuma: BLM's Yuma Field Office sponsored an Eagle Scout project to clean up a popular off-highway vehicle (OHV) area in December 2011. A troop of Scouts also installed an interpretive kiosk to promote responsible OHV use. Local communities had expressed concern over two OHV-use-related fatalities that had occurred at the site; there have been none since the kiosk was installed.

Las Cienegas National Conservation Area: The Empire Ranch Roundup drew more than 3,500 visitors and featured interpretive talks, living history presentations, horse riding demonstrations, riata "rope making" sessions, chuckwagon cooking, fiddle music, and more.

CALIFORNIA

Bakersfield: The San Joaquin River Gorge Hands on the Land site provides interactive ways for participants to investigate the local environment and learn about local history and culture. The program, conducted along the scenic San Joaquin River in central California, reaches about 6,000 students and teachers each year.

California Desert District: The BLM is a major partner in presenting the "America's Great Outdoors" exhibit to approximately 1.5 million visitors to the Los Angeles County Fair each fall. The fair site is hosted by several agencies on 1.5 acres for 3 weeks in September.

Palm Springs–South Coast Field Office: The BLM, in partnership with the Coachella Valley Unified School District, inaugurated a "Public Lands Boot Camp" for Riverside County High School graduates who are now attending California State University at Chico and College of the Desert.

"When you take Colorado youth corps, tie them in with veterans, mix that with the Bureau of Land Management staff that's in Colorado, then you begin to get a pretty rich soup. Mix in some private industry funders to provide resources or donations, add the Conservation Lands Foundation. Now it's seasoned, now it's got heat and energy."

—John Hickenlooper
Governor, State of Colorado

COLORADO

McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area: In June 2012, nearly 370 families became "Nature Trackers" at the Fruita Paleontological Area. Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting System partnered with the Dinosaur Journey Museum, BLM, National Park Service, Colorado Canyons Association, and John McConnell Math and Science Center to provide activities for students from preschool to high school.

Montrose: From April through October 2012, five river rangers patrolled the BLM's Gunnison Gorge Wilderness, Dominguez Canyon Wilderness, and San Miguel River Special Recreation Management Area. The river rangers made 3,294 visitor contacts and conducted 17 outreach activities, including float trips, hikes, and stewardship projects, with the assistance of 94 volunteers who logged 1,350 hours.

Montrose: The Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area hosted its fourth annual Cottonwood Education Days, a Take It Outside! event, in the fall of 2012. Over the course of 4 days in September, 600 sixth-grade students from communities surrounding the area participated in daylong learning modules on the banks of the Gunnison River. Students learned about aquatic invertebrate collection and identification and took a discovery hike to compare riparian and semidesert ecosystems.

EASTERN STATES

Southeastern States Field Office: The BLM participated in the Mississippi Archaeology Expo, held at historic Millsaps College during Mississippi Archaeology Month in October. The expo was a hands-on family fair for school-age children and adults, who learned about the prehistory and history of Mississippi.

Lower Potomac Field Station: The Eastern States environmental education program, based in Lorton, Virginia, reached more than 5,000 youths from the Washington, DC, metropolitan area in 2012. The First Lady's Let's Move Outside initiative was also supported; students participated in swimming, biking, canoeing, fishing, hiking, birding, camping, stargazing, and team building.

IDAHO

Idaho State Office: The Field Inquiry Research Experience (F.I.R.E.) Up program continued its award-winning partnership among the BLM, Northwest Nazarene University, Boise Joint School District, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In 2012, the program recruited 24 students from 10 schools to develop sophisticated maps and imagery of public lands.

Idaho Falls: The Upper Snake River Field Office developed the BLM Junior Explorer booklet "Trekking Volcanoes in Eastern Idaho." It is distributed at the Eastern Idaho Visitor Information Center.

TAKING THE PUBLIC LANDS TO HEART

A new BLM Artist-in-Residence program began with a pilot project involving four artists at the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado and one artist at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah. The program encourages awareness of the exceptional places on the public lands. Five posters, each featuring the work of one of the artists, were printed. A traveling exhibit appeared at several venues, and a national web page featured the artwork and program information.

MONTANA/DAKOTAS

Billings: The "Back to the Future with Lewis and Clark" program on technology and history was presented to more than 1,000 students in Billings middle schools. The Pompeys Pillar National Monument staff used William Clark's journal to teach students about Clark's visit in 1806. The program was held at the College of Technology (now City College) at Montana State University Billings.

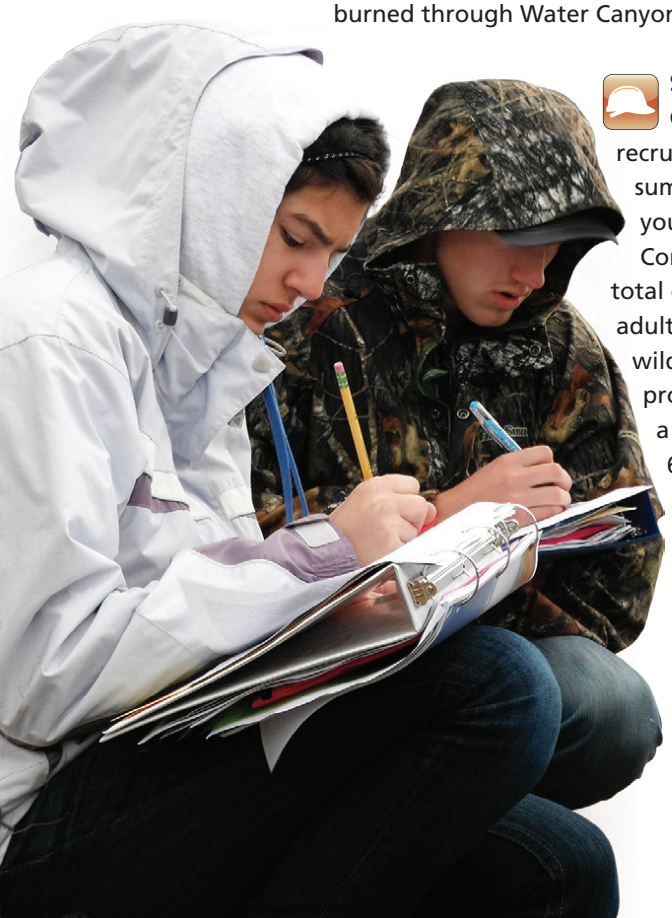
Billings: Montana Conservation Corps members participated in chain-saw training, then used their new skills to clear out dead wood at the Pompeys Pillar National Monument. Following the training, the BLM staff hosted a celebration of the national Girl Scouts of the USA centennial for more than 500 Montana Girl Scouts.

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument: Boy Scout Troop 366 from Bothell in western Washington State traveled to Fort Benton to work towards achieving the Scouts' Historic Trails Award and 50-Miler Award. The Scouts assisted the BLM with several service projects, including two that highlighted the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act.

NEVADA

Elko: The Elko District Office presented more than 200 environmental education, interpretation, and Take It Outside! events at both the California Trail Interpretive Center and on public lands nearby. Major events included the Truckee River Environmental Education (TREE) Days at McCarran Ranch, managed by the BLM Carson City Field Office and The Nature Conservancy. Hundreds of fourth-grade students from Washoe County and Lyon County attended.

Winnemucca: The Water Canyon third-grade field trip was one of the most popular and successful youth partnership programs for the BLM in Nevada. Since 2007, more than 1,200 students have spent a day in May studying evidence of a wildfire that burned through Water Canyon in 2006.



Statewide: The Student Conservation Association recruited and placed two summer youth crews and two young adult Conservation Corps in Nevada in 2012. A total of 28 youths and young adults completed multiple wildlife- and recreation-related projects and accomplished a total of approximately 6,500 hours of service valued at more than $140,000.

A YEAR OF HISTORY

The year 2012 marked two historic events for the BLM: the 200th anniversary of the General Land Office (GLO)—the predecessor agency of the BLM—and the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act. BLM state and field offices commemorated the milestones with many local and national events. On April 25, the Eastern States Office marked the GLO anniversary with a special ceremony in Springfield, Virginia.

NEW MEXICO

Las Cruces: On National Fossil Day in September, the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument partnered with nine agencies and organizations to offer hands-on fossil education stations for all 500 students of the Desert Hills Elementary School. The monument also organized field trips for more than 100 primary and middle school teachers.

Moore, OK: In 2012, the BLM, Mustang Heritage Foundation, and Colbert Ranch joined forces with Williamson County Juvenile Detention Center in Georgetown, Texas, to bring three separate 2-day camps to the center's incarcerated students.

Roswell: EcoServants, a BLM hosted worker organization, built 100 miles of high-quality trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain bike riding at the Fort Stanton–Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area. The 30 EcoServants are primarily at-risk, high-school-aged workers who specialize in sustainable trail work.

OREGON/WASHINGTON

Medford, OR: In 2012, the BLM staff conducted an interactive, hands-on activity at the Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners Symposium using the "Build a Healthy Riparian Zone" kit to show 300 students what it takes to maintain a healthy watershed.

Spokane, WA: BLM's Spokane District employees spent a week in the fall training 20 students from Cheney High School to help lead a science education field trip for 284 fourth-grade students from the Cheney School District to BLM's Fishtrap Recreation Area.

Prineville, OR: A youth crew from the regional Heart of Oregon Corps completed a variety of projects implementing local resource management plans. The 22-member crew contributed approximately 12,000 hours of work erecting fencing, creating and rehabilitating trails, removing juniper trees, and installing signs.

UTAH

Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument: The monument staff partnered with Southern Utah University's Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative and Utah Department of Workforce Services to hire young people from diverse backgrounds to assist with BLM projects such as fence building, trail work, rangeland monitoring, and visitor center maintenance.

Monticello: The BLM joined the Four Corners School of Outdoor Education for a 4-day Summer Science Camp that immersed Utah students from ages 12 to18 in an outdoor classroom environment on the San Juan River. Students built a clay model of the limestone canyon and constructed and operated a "natural" stream table model of the San Juan River on its sandy beach.

PROJECT ARCHAEOLOGY REACHES OUT

Through a partnership between the BLM and Montana State University, the Project Archaeology program offers basic and advanced professional development for educators throughout the nation. In June 2012, the third annual Project Archaeology Leadership Academy opened new doors to educators in eight states. The first printing of the basic curriculum guide, "Project Archaeology: Investigating Shelter," sold out, and the second printing was completed in July.

Salt Lake: BLM employees and other agency specialists helped lead guided field exercises for the Nature High Summer Camp, a weeklong, intensive, energetic learning experience for Utah high school students, who were introduced to "a day in the life" of a natural resource specialist.

WYOMING

Casper: A local college professor worked with BLM's archaeologist in Casper at the BLM/Central Wyoming College 2012 Field School. Students completed two 10-day field sessions, surveying approximately 980 acres for cultural heritage resources.

Casper: Fourth-Grade Frontier Days in Casper featured a wide variety of educational experiences including gold panning, visiting a historic general store and school, "mountain man" instruction, education about Native American culture, folk dancing, and much more.

Rock Springs: During the summer of 2012, students from the Conservation Outdoor Recreation Education (CORE) program met at the Blucher Creek Campground to build fire rings and picnic tables. Sixteen students built two group sites. Students were also taught the basics of using a compass and orienteering.

JUNIOR EXPLORERS NEAR AND FAR

A new round of BLM Junior Explorer booklets was officially launched in 2012. A series of booklets on national themes began with the "Geology and Fossils" booklet released in 2012, followed by "Wild Horses and Burros." BLM state and field offices began work on 42 site-specific Junior Explorer activity guides, with booklets completed by the Elko District Office (NV), Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NV), John Jarvie Ranch Historic Site (UT), National Historic Trails Interpretive Center (WY), and other sites. The booklets are available for download on the new Junior Explorers web page.

BLM Education, Interpretation, and Youth Engagement Program Data for FY 2012

Data was compiled by the BLM Washington Office in the spring of 2013. More than 700 reports were submitted by state and field offices on education, interpretive, Take It Outside! and youth employment programs conducted during fiscal year 2012.

Additional data is available from BLM's Division of Education, Interpretation, and Partnerships.

Visit us at ***www.blm.gov/education.***

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BLM Education Program Participants

State Office	Hands on the Land	Other Education Programs	Total
Alaska	10,814	603	11,417
Arizona	617	7,235	7,852
California	20,093	2,458	22,551
Colorado	262	14,181	14,443
Eastern States	50	1,500	1,550
Idaho	30	599	629
Montana/Dakotas	1,110	3,878	4,988
Nevada	3,412	10,095	13,507
New Mexico	2,924	6,940	9,864
Oregon/Washington	8,491	33,846	42,337
Utah	1,962	8,469	10,431
Wyoming	402	4,233	4,635
Total	**50,167**	**94,037**	**144,204**

BLM Interpretive Program and Take It Outside! Participants

State Office	Interpretive	Take it Outside!
Alaska	67,897	944
Arizona	261,561	6,743
California	1,514,952	2,998
Colorado	24,871	8,822
Eastern States	77,300	9,704
Idaho	27,185	1,958
Montana/Dakotas	24,425	1,053
Nevada	379,943	5,476
New Mexico	164,500	299
Oregon/Washington	385,800	16,325
Utah	165,218	6,235
Wyoming	162,544	14,434
Total	3,256,196	74,991

BLM and Partner Youth Hires

Office	BLM	Partner	Total
Alaska	91	98	189
Arizona	54	191	245
California	204	216	420
Colorado	120	297	417
Eastern States	29	16	45
Idaho	271	100	371
Montana/Dakotas	136	91	227
Nevada	208	310	518
New Mexico	152	74	226
Oregon/Washington	410	541	951
Utah	159	107	266
Wyoming	186	61	247
Fire and Aviation	16	0	16
National Operations Center	20	0	20
Washington, DC	51	2	53
Total	2,107	2,104	4,211

A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

The publication of the BLM "Education, Interpretation, and Youth Engagement: National Strategy and Implementation Plan 2013–2018" will move the agency's education and related programming forward significantly during the next 5 years. In 2013, BLM state offices created their own implementation plans using a common template and will designate leads for education, interpretation, and youth programs.

On the cover: BLM mascot Seymour Antelope and friends at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in October 2011.

Photo courtesy New Mexico BLM.